

WAFER BUFFERING SYSTEM

Abstract of the Disclosure

Wafer buffering systems for use with a wafer processing system include a frame and wheel. The wheel includes a plurality of shelves for supporting a plurality of wafer carriers. The wheel is supported by the frame for rotation about a generally horizontal axis. The plane of the wheel faces a semiconductor processing system (e.g., a cluster tool) with an intervening wafer transfer robot located preferably between the wheel and the semiconductor processing system. A cassette transfer system moves cassettes from the wheel to a port for interfacing with the wafer transfer robot. In another arrangement, a horizontal carousel stocks cassettes above the processing system.

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